

Somerset County Council.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

DISTRICT :—MINEHEAD.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (acres) : 2,739.

Population : Census 1931, 6,060.
Estimated 1937, 6,356.
Number of inhabited houses, 1937, 1,952.
Number of families or separate occupiers, 1937, 2,192.
Rateable Value, £77,757.
Sum represented by a penny rate, £301.

Social Conditions.

Minehead is best described as a residential health resort. There is no manufacturing industry other than brickworks, but a large section of the population is occupied with the provision of accommodation for visitors. A small proportion is employed in the maintenance and driving of motor conveyances, and a certain number is employed in the various branches of the building trade. The social conditions are good ; the number of really necessitous poor is low.

Vital Statistics.

	TOTAL.	M.	F.	
Live Births—Legitimate ...	50	25	25	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population, 8.49
Illegitimate ...	4	3	1	
Stillbirths—Legitimate ...	1	—	1	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births, 18.18.
Deaths ...	86	35	51	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population, 13.53.

Deaths from Puerperal Sepsis :—0.
Deaths from other Puerperal Causes :—0.
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :—
All Infants per 1,000 live births :—37.03.
Deaths from Cancer (all ages) :—14.
Deaths from Measles (all ages) :—0.
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) :—1.
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) :—0.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Diseases.	Cases Notified.	Admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Scarlet Fever ...	4	3	—
Enteric Fever ...	1	—	1
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	1	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	1	—	—

ANALYSIS OF TOTAL DEATHS IN AGE GROUPS.

								M.	F.
Deaths under 1 years	...2—Whooping cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
	Congenital debility &c.	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
" " 2 "	0—	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
" " 3 "	1—Other defined diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
" " 4 "	1—Other violence	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
" " 5 "	0—	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
" " 10 "	1—Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
" " 15 "	1—Other defined diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
" " 20 "	0—	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
" " 35 "	8—Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	3
	Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
	Other violence	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	—
	Paratyphoid	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
	Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
" " 45 "	2—Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
	Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
" " 65 "	19—Cerebral haemorrhage	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
	Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
	Other defined diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
	Heart disease	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
	Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	4
	Diabetes	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
	Other circulatory diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
	Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
	Other digestive diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
	Other liver diseases...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
" over 65 "	51—Cerebral haemorrhage	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	3
	Aneurysm	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
	Other defined diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	4
	Heart disease	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	15
	Other respiratory diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	—
	Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	2
	Other circulatory diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	1
	Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
	Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
	Other digestive diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	—
	Other violence	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
	Other liver diseases...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
	Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
	Senility	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	2

(15 deaths over 80).
(3 deaths over 90).

TUBERCULOSIS.											
Age Periods	NEW CASES.						DEATHS.				
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.				Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		
	M.	F.	M.	F.			M.	F.	M.	F.	
1	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
5	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
10	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
15	2	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
20	2	6	...	—	—	...	—	2	...	—	—
35	—	1	...	1	—	...	1	—	...	—	—
45	—	—	...	—	—	...	1	—	...	—	—
55	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
65 and upwards	—	1	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
Total ...	4	8	...	1	—	...	2	2	...	—	—

Public Health Officers of the Authority.

One part-time Medical Officer.
One Public Vaccinator.
One Poor Law Officer.
One part-time Veterinary Surgeon.

Nursing in the Home.

- (a) The District Nursing Association supports two nurses who are also midwives, and are available for extern midwifery work.
Private Nurses are available locally, and are also drawn from Institutions in the neighbouring towns.
- (b) Infectious Diseases:—No special arrangements are made with regard to the nursing of infectious cases in the home, with the exception of Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Midwives.

There are two midwives in the area, maintained by the District Nursing Association.

Laboratory Facilities.

Clinical material for investigation is sent to the Public Health Laboratories at Taunton. This Institution also deals with the examination of water, milk, and food stuffs.

Legislation in Force.

Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1889.
Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890 (Part 3).
Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890.
Public Health Act, 1925. Sections 13 to 43, 45 to 49, and 51 to 55 all inclusive, comprised in Parts ii., iii., iv., and v.
Order dated 19th September, 1912, of the Local Government Board, parts 5, 6, and 10, and certain sections comprised in parts 2, 3, and 4, of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907.
Order dated 2nd January, 1913, of the Secretary of State, sections 79, 80, 81, 82, and 83 of part 7, part 8, and part 9 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907.
Order dated 3rd April, 1923, of the Somerset County Council, in pursuance of the Isolation Hospitals Act, 1893 and 1901.
Order dated January, 1929, of the Ministry of Health. Regulations for treatment of Small-pox.
Baths and Wash-houses Acts.
Housing Act, 1935.

Hospitals.

The Minehead and West Somerset Hospital is a charitable Institution providing accommodation for 58 patients. The beds are allotted as follows:—20 male, 20 female, 6 children, and 12 private patients.

The Hospital is used by the town and the surrounding district. The management of the Hospital is carried out by a Committee elected by the subscribers.

The Honorary Medical Staff consists of five. There are also two Honorary Dental Surgeons and a Radiologist. Besides the Honorary Staff a Resident Medical Officer is maintained.

The Hospital has every facility for operative surgery, also for operative dental surgery. There are special departments for X-ray, massage and electrotherapeutics. The Pathological work of the Institution is carried out partly by the County Laboratory and partly by Dr. W. A. Robb, of Exeter.

913 patients were treated as in-patients during the year. Of these 546 were surgical, 262 medical, 22 abnormal maternity, and 60 dental. The Massage and Electrotherapeutic Department gave 2,447 treatments during the year.

Infectious Diseases.

The Isolation Hospital for infectious diseases is situated at Tivington. The Hospital is divided into two blocks, and has accommodation for 22 patients. The Hospital was intended for the reception of patients suffering from scarlet fever, diphtheria, and enteric, but if the accommodation allows, cases of encephalitis lethargica, cerebro-spinal meningitis, puerperal septicaemia, erysipelas, and measles complicated with pneumonia are also admitted. The Staff consists of a Medical Officer, Matron, and two permanent Nurses. Temporary Nurses are obtained as required.

Ambulance Facilities.

For infectious diseases an Ambulance is maintained by the Authority of the Isolation Hospital.

For non-infectious diseases two Motor Ambulances are maintained by the St. John Ambulance Brigade. This is supported by voluntary contributions.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.

Clinics are provided by the Council for the following diseases:—

Tuberculosis—Once a week.

Orthopaedic—Three major clinics are held each year and one minor clinic is held each month.

Venereal Diseases—Once a week.

Sunlight Treatment—Twice a week.

These Clinics are all held at 54, Summerland Avenue, Minehead.

Water.

The water supply during the year was maintained without curtailment. During the year there were 13 re-tappings of the water main for the purpose of improving the supply to existing premises. Thirty-nine new tapings were made for the supply of new properties. The main in Quay Street was fractured on one occasion, causing a short interruption in the supplies to this road.

Samples of water were taken at Nutscale and at the Minehead intake works. These were satisfactory.

Flushing was carried out periodically and the filter beds scoured.

Sewerage.

The sewerage system has worked satisfactorily throughout the year. Storm water has again caused trouble on several occasions, the localities principally affected being Blenheim, Ponsford, and Hayfield Roads. This problem is to be dealt with piecemeal as and when finances permit.

The storm water relief sewer in Blenheim Road is the commencement of this work and already has had satisfactory results. Your Surveyor's recommendations with regard to the extension of this relief sewer will be carried out at discretion.

The recommendation to drain the road surface water of a certain portion of the town on a separate system is undoubtedly the best one to be adopted where expense permits. Here again the recommendation is to deal with the area in sections from year to year. A further extension of the northern sewer will receive your attention in the near future.

House Refuse.

The collection and disposal of house refuse during the year has been satisfactory. The modern sanitary waggons adopted last year have continued to give satisfaction in the direction of cleanliness and expedition.

Your Surveyor in his annual report gives considerable space to the consideration of the increase in garbage and its disposal. Precautions have been taken to diminish the risk of fire in the tip and to limit the fire should there be an outbreak. He calls attention to the amount of litter left everywhere by visitors during the month of August. He puts before you suggestions for dealing with this unfortunate habit of August holiday-makers.

Street Scavenging.

This work is carried out satisfactorily except during the month of August. The additional labour employed during this month was not sufficient to maintain the usual level of cleanliness.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The following house inspections were made by the Sanitary Inspector during the year:—
For insufficient water supply—13.
After infectious diseases—4.
For re-habitation—6.
For defective drains—6.
For nuisances of smoke, rats, smells, &c.—19.
Various—12.

Premises Controlled by Bye-Laws.

Minehead has practically no such premises, and no steps were necessary.

Schools.

The water supply and lavatory accommodation of the schools are adequate. They are well ventilated and thoroughly clean. They are periodically disinfected, and receive special attention after the outbreak of any infectious disease. The health of the scholars is under the care of the School Medical Officers, who make periodical visits of inspection.

Disinfection.

Disinfection of premises and bedding is carried out after all cases of acute infectious fever. It is also carried out in cases where, in the opinion of the doctor in attendance, it is desirable. Such cases are dealt with by the Council on the recommendation of the Doctor concerned.

Housing.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(i) With State Assistance :—	
(a) By the Local Authority	Nil.
(b) By other bodies or persons	Nil.
(ii) Otherwise	37

1.—Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :—

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	59
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	65
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under Sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ...	8
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	8
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	Nil.
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	9

2.—Remedy of Defects during the year without service of Formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	9
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3.—Action under Statutory Powers during the Year :—

(a) Proceedings under sections 17, 18, and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930 :—	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	Nil.
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—	
(a) By owners	Nil.
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	Nil.

(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	9
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—	
(a) By owners	9
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	Nil.
(c) Proceedings under sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930 :—	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	Nil.
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	Nil.
(d) Proceedings under section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930 :—	
(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ...	Nil.
4.—Housing Act, 1935. Overcrowding :—	
(a) (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	Nil.
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein	Nil.
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein	Nil.
(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
(c) (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	1
(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases	6
(d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding ...	Nil.

(a) **Milk Supply.**

Number of Producers on the Register—9.

Number of Distributors on the Register, divided as follows :—

(a) Distributors only—1.

(b) Distributors who are also Producers—9.

There are 3 Retailers licensed to sell Grade "A" Milk, 3 Distributors of Tuberculin-tested Milk, and 1 distributor of Pasteurised Milk.

Inspection of the Farms and Dairies is carried out by the Veterinary Inspector and Sanitary Inspector. Cleanliness is enforced and defects pointed out.

The Veterinary Inspector reports that in his department everything is satisfactory.

(b) **Meat.**

The Cowsheds, Dairies, Fish, Provision, and Butchers' Shops and Public Abattoir are under constant inspection and supervision by your Meat and Sanitary Inspector, and are kept clean and in good order.

(c) **Adulteration.**

No steps have been taken.

The above data taken together demonstrate the satisfactory condition of the health of the town during the year under review. The births and deaths have varied but little from the previous two years; the birth rate being 2.36 down and the death rate 1.58 up. The number of notifications of infectious diseases during the year was 7. No epidemic of any magnitude occurred during the year.

An analysis of the total deaths in age groups suggests the absence of any outbreak of acute disease; 35 of the 86 deaths occurred below the age of 65 and 51 over. Fifteen of these deaths were over 80 and 3 over 90. As would be expected diseases of the heart and circulation are the principal causes of deaths. Cancer is responsible for 14 deaths and the number of deaths from violence is unusual.

One case of overcrowding occurred which was dealt with satisfactorily.

I am fortunate to be able to record that the water supply has been maintained throughout the year without restriction. The period of August was a very anxious one in this respect. Notices to householders asking for their co-operation in conserving water were sent out during this month. The supply at Nutscale was heavily penalised, the whole stream being utilised at one period. The question of storage was gone into very fully by an Inspector from the Ministry of Health, and I will not labour the matter further than to record that he approved of the site at Nutscale for the reservoir, subject to certain conditions. I understand that since the end of the year matters have gone forward. This provision of storage is overdue and it is hoped the work will be expedited in every possible way.

As building develops in all directions the need for conserving open spaces becomes more apparent. As the regional town planning is taking shape it will be more easy to recognise where further open spaces should be obtained. I should like once more to emphasise the desirability of including Bratton in the town area.

The sewerage system and the disposal of refuse are satisfactory. The method of dealing with the sewerage extensions and improvements year by year is a sound one.

I should like once more to express my high opinion of the work done by Mr. Barron and his staff, and to express my thanks both to Mr. Mansfield and Mr. Barron for their courtesy and co-operation during the year. I should also like to thank the Council for their attention and consideration to my recommendations.

W. BAIN, M.B., B.S.Lond.,

Medical Officer of Health.

May, 1938.